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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 DHAKA 005595

SIPDIS

FOR MAI HIJAZI, ROSE MCCULLOUGH, AND DIANA PRIETO, USAID/GH/OHA/IS

E.O. 12958:N/A

TAGS: OTRA BG

SUBJECT: COUNTRY CLEARANCE FOR MARGARET ROWAN, POLICY PROJECT

REF: EMAIL DATED NOVEMBER 13, 2005

Action Required: See Paragraphs # 2, 4-D and 9.

¶1. Embassy Dhaka welcomes Margaret Rowan, Senior Planning and Finance Advisor of Policy Project, on her December 11-17, 2005 visit and grants country clearance, contingent repeat contingent on obtaining a Bangladeshi visa on her passport prior to arrival in Bangladesh (see Paragraph 3.D. and 3.E. below). Control Officer will be Sheri-Nouane Johnson, Deputy Director, Office of Population, Health and Nutrition. Contact information: Phone (Office) 88-02-885-5500 Ext. 2345, (Home) 882-885-9923, (FAX) 882-3648, E-mail address: snjohnson@usaid.gov. Ms. Rowan holds no security clearance. The purpose of her visit is to follow-up on the private sector workshop conducted in September, 2005 and assist in the preparation of the public/private sector workshop on family planning tentatively scheduled for January 2006.

¶2. As of January 1, 2005 direct hire and PSC, (non-State Department), USG TDY personnel who will be in Bangladesh for 30 days or more, are required to take and pass the SAFE course. SAFE, Safety Abroad for Families and Employees is a four day security training course offered by FSI, Department of State. Please contact the Office of the Registrar, Room F-2210, SA-42. Fax: 703-302-7152. The Department strongly recommends that commercial contract employees and others also take the SAFE course. (For further information, please contact the Assistant Director for Training, Diplomatic security, Mr. William Armor at armorwd@state.gov or Phone: 703-205-2816.) See STATE cable 93760 dated 27 April 2004 and STATE cable 066580 dated 25 March 2004, for details.

¶3. The Mission's workweek is Sunday-Thursday 0800 hours to 1630 hours. There will not be any local/American holidays during the visit period.

¶4. Comments:

¶A. The traveler is advised to carry a copy of this cable with him/her for reference.

¶B. Hotel reservations have been made/confirmed by the Policy Travel Administrator at the Lake Castle Hotel, telephone number 881-2812, 881-4137, FAX number 88-02-881-4915, which is within Embassy per diem.

¶C. Embassy expeditor and control officer will meet and assist her at airport (arriving 12/11/05 at 1200 hrs via Thai Airways Flight #TG321; departure scheduled for 12/17/05 at 1310 hrs via save Airways Flight #TG322 to Washington via Bangkok). Please advise if there is any change in flight information. Travelers making more than one connecting flight should consider rechecking their baggage, especially if transferring within the region. Embassy also advises carrying a change of clothes and all important documents in your carry-on bags.

¶D. IMPORTANT - PLEASE NOTE: Personnel entering Bangladesh are required to possess a valid passport, with a minimum validity of six months. A valid visa is required prior to arrival. There are no exceptions. Any traveler arriving without a valid visa will be returned to the United States or their country of origin upon the next available flight. Visas are no longer issued upon arrival. Please ensure that your visa is valid for at least six months after your scheduled departure date from Dhaka.

¶E. In special circumstances, Post will arrange for an airport visa upon arrival for persons originating travel to Bangladesh from countries where there is no Bangladesh visa-issuing mission. For an airport visa we require (1) a faxed photocopy of the traveler's passport bio-data page, sent to 880-2-882-4449 at least 7 calendar days in advance; and (2) a statement from the losing post that there is no Bangladesh mission in that country. The Embassy will not, repeat, not provide this service to persons originating travel in countries that have a Bangladesh visa-issuing mission. However, we urge all travelers to attempt to obtain a visa prior to traveling to Post.

¶5. Departure and onward travel: All departing personnel (including holders of diplomatic and official passports) are urged to use the services of the U.S. Mission's travel agent for reconfirming onward travel and to verify if the departure tax, approximately Taka 300 (approximately USD 4.61) and the travel tax

(approximately Taka 2500) have been included in the cost of the ticket. If not included, each traveler will be required to pay the taxes, in Taka only, at the airport.

**16. Action Request: Fiscal Data.** Each visitor, regardless of length of stay, must bring/forward fiscal data to pay for direct costs of the visit. Each agency, organization or visiting delegation will be charged for the actual costs attributed to its visit. Direct charge costs include, but are not limited to: American and LES overtime (for such services as airport expediting, cashier accommodation exchange, control room staffing, representational event support), travel and per diem costs incurred by post personnel in support of visitor's field travel, rental of vehicles and other equipment, long distance telephone calls, office supplies, gasoline and other vehicle maintenance costs, departure tax and other airport fees as appropriate. For TDYers remaining at post over 30 days, there is a charge for ICASS support services. This charge is for the following ICASS services: Basic Package, CLO and Health Services. Agencies will not be billed until the accumulated invoice cost for TDY support exceeds \$2,500 for the fiscal year. If your sponsoring agency is not signed up for ICASS services at post, please be prepared to sign a Memorandum of Understanding for ICASS support services upon arrival. The agency should provide post with a written communication, generated by the traveler's headquarters, that confirms the agency will pay ICASS charges for the TDYer, provides the agency ICASS billing code the TDY support charges should be applied to, and authorizes the traveler to sign the ICASS invoice generated by the TDY module. Where travel is urgent, the TDYer should bring this documentation with him/her to ensure there are no interruptions in the provision of service. Post will not provide any service to a TDYer staying in excess of thirty days without provision of this documentation before day 31 of the TDY.

**17. Currency:** The local use of U.S. Dollars (USD) is prohibited by law, except for the payment of a hotel bill. The local currency, the Taka, must be used for all other local transactions. Accommodation exchange is available at the Chancery through the Citibank cashier. The exchange rate fluctuates and is currently approximately Taka 65 to USD 1.00. Reverse accommodation exchange is available only at the original place of exchange with original documents and receipts as proof. Automatic Teller Machines (ATMs) are limited and dispense Taka only. Travelers checks cannot be used in most establishments except international hotels. However, the Citibank at the Chancery will cash traveler checks for Taka only. Most major credit cards are accepted at international hotels.

**18. Club and Commissary:**

**1A.** The American Recreation Association (known as ARA or "The Club") facility is available to U.S. citizen official visitors for a temporary membership fee of USD 10.00 per week. This can not be pro-rated for a shorter visit. In addition to the membership fee, you will be required to purchase a cash card, USD 10.00 per card or Taka 650.00. A copy of your passport data page or a passport-sized photograph is necessary to obtain a cash card. This card will enable you to have meals and use club facilities (which include tennis court, squash court, swimming pool, exercise room, and restaurant/bar.)

**1B.** The U.S. Commissary facility is available to U.S. citizen official visitors who are USG employees. However, payment is permitted only by USD personal check or traveler checks. Cash dollars and local currency payments cannot be accepted. Change will not be provided for transactions using traveler checks. Therefore, smaller denomination traveler checks would be more useful.

**19. NOTE:** Health - Post cannot emphasize strongly enough that all travelers must have health insurance that will cover medical evacuations by air ambulance. Travelers should carry with them the 24/7 contact information for their insurer. Medical care in Bangladesh is very basic and Post does not recommend that anyone remain hospitalized here.

MEDICAL UNIT ACCESS WILL BE AVAILABLE IF INDIVIDUALS MEET THE SPECIFIC CRITERIA ESTABLISHED BY STATE MED AS OUTLINED IN SECSTATE 2398, 201464, 158215, AND 36783.

Intestinal problems are common in Dhaka. Visitors must exercise care in what they eat and drink; food-borne diseases are common. Presume that all tap water is contaminated, even in hotels. Travelers are advised to drink bottled/boiled water and eat only fruits and vegetables that have been cooked and peeled. Undercooked meat should be avoided. Travelers should also avoid eating uncooked dairy products and food sold on the streets. Visitors who take medication on a regular basis should bring enough for the duration of their visit. It is not always possible to find equivalents for American prescriptions on the local market. In general, local medical facilities are substandard. The U.S. Mission has a Medical Unit staffed by a U.S. Physician and registered nurses. Travelers venturing outside Dhaka are advised to use standard anti-malaria prophylaxis, including taking appropriate anti-malarial medication, using mosquito protection and the use of bed netting. It is strongly recommended that all

visitors bring a supply of mosquito repellent to Dhaka. There have been cases of mosquito-borne illnesses, including malaria and dengue fever, which is transmitted by a day-biting mosquito. The only effective repellent we are aware of contains DEET (20% DEET is the maximum that is considered safe for children). Supplies are usually available in the commissary; however it is a good idea to have your own supply should you arrive in Dhaka when the commissary is not open. We also recommend that travelers have updated immunizations, especially an up-to-date typhoid immunization (either oral or injectable.)

There are a multitude of potential threats to health in Bangladesh, and medical resources and facilities are often sub-standard. All visitors are advised to carefully review their medical conditions and vaccination status to be sure they are optimal. Although many medications are available in Bangladesh, their purity and quality may be poor; visitors should bring their own supply.

Certain conditions prevalent in Bangladesh deserve special consideration. Malaria is found in most parts of the country and malaria prophylaxis is recommended by the Centers for Disease Control outside of Dhaka. Malaria is not generally a problem in Dhaka. Rabies is relatively common in Bangladesh and most dogs are not vaccinated; vaccination against rabies is recommended. Protection against mosquitoes is important, as they carry dengue fever, Japanese encephalitis, and malaria. Personal protection against mosquitoes, including such efforts as mosquito nets, application of DEET repellents, and avoidance of areas where mosquitoes are known to be prevalent is recommended.

Access to the American Embassy Health Unit in Dhaka is limited to medically cleared U.S.G. employees and their eligible family members. All visitors who desire to access the Health Unit (HU) must bring copies of their current country-specific health clearance for Dhaka (Form DS-823) or transmit their clearance status by cable. U.S.G. employees on official TDY status for less than 60 days (cumulative, per year) are allowed access to the HU without a current clearance for Dhaka. Some short-term contractors with official MED sanction are also allowed access. All other visitors must obtain their health care from other sources and are not allowed American Embassy HU access. The HU maintains a list of health resources and can help with referrals. Medevac insurance is recommended for persons not covered under the Department of State system.

110. Security: Bangladesh continues to experience some anti-American sentiment as the result of U.S. military and other actions in the war against terrorism, and events in the Middle East. Anti-American demonstrations throughout Bangladesh, which generally occur on Friday afternoons, have the potential to take place any time and to be unruly. In addition, the longstanding confrontation between the two leading political parties has prompted general strikes (hartals), public demonstrations and marches. They can be called on very short notice and can turn violent. Normal vehicular traffic is discouraged during hartals. Visitors should strictly avoid all political protests, demonstrations and marches. They should consider possible security risks in deciding whether to attend other gatherings.

111. Post policy authorizes travelers visiting post to hand carry an unclassified laptop into the Controlled Access Area providing that the laptop is transported under the immediate personal control of the traveler, or is transported via diplomatic pouch, with prior approval of the RSO. All travelers must also maintain continuous, immediate custody of a laptop while in the CAA. Further instructions will be given during the security brief upon arrival.

112. The Embassy advises Americans to be aware of their surroundings at all times, to avoid predictable behavior, and not to accept packages from unknown individuals. Sensitive or personal matters should not be discussed over local telephone lines.

113. The State Department has classified the crime threat in Dhaka as high. Foreigners are not generally the target of violent crime. However, pick-pocketing, purse-snatching and other forms of street crime occur frequently, especially in areas frequented by foreigners. Visitors should avoid walking alone after dark, carrying large sums of money, or wearing expensive jewelry. Valuables should be stored in the hotel safety deposit box and should not be left unattended in hotel rooms. Visitors should use the Embassy Motor Pool as the Chief of Mission has declared public transportation to be unsafe. The Regional Security Officer strongly discourages the use of rickshaws, baby taxis, and other public transport. In addition, you should keep the Embassy's 24-hour emergency telephone number available at all times (880-02-885-5500); receptionists are on duty 24 hours a day.

114. Ms. Rowan will contact mission on arrival to arrange briefing and/or debriefing as requested.

115. We look forward to your visit.

CHAMMAS